

HEALTH

Little Scabies Mites Cause Big Itch

They're tiny mites that cause a mighty itch. And the sharing of gloves and mittens in winter can spread the *Sarcoptes scabiei* mites, which cause scabies.

"These mites are common in Oregon. But because of the stigma, people don't talk about being infested," says Kaiser Permanente's infection control expert Nancy Church.

Church, who practices at Bess Kaiser Medical Center in north Portland, says children and adults pick up the mites from close contact with an

infested person, anything from holding hands to wrestling with schoolmates. They can also be spread when people have sex or sleep together.

"Intense itching usually appears from four to six weeks after a person is first exposed," she says. "If you've been exposed before, the symptoms can occur in as little as a day or two."

Fortunately, the mites can be killed with an application of prescription lotions. The lotions must be spread over the body from the neck down. "We must treat everybody in

the household even if only one person appears infested," says Church. "Clothes and bedding also need to be washed and dried on hot cycles."

Church encouraged people to get prompt treatment as the mites multiply rapidly, enlarging the rash. "Don't be ashamed to see a doctor. Scabies show up among the rich and poor, among all ages and occupations - even orchestra members at the San Francisco Opera recently suffered from an outbreak."

Oregon Nurses Association Receives \$10,000 Grant Immunization Project

The grant from the American Nurses Foundation, Inc. will fund one year of neighborhood immunization clinics.

The Oregon Nurses Association has received a \$10,000 grant from the American Nurses Foundation, Inc. to fund a monthly Lents neighborhood immunization clinic, for the period of one year. The Oregon Nurses Association was notified of the award January 19, 1995.

The overall objective of the Lents Immunization Project is to develop a nursing/community partnership model that significantly increases and sustains the immunization status of disadvantaged, urban preschoolers in Southeast Portland's Lents Neighborhood.

The Oregon Nurses Association has joined with Pilgrim Lutheran Church, 4244 SE 91st Avenue, the Multnomah County Health Department and the Lents Neighborhood Association to provide this grass-roots immunization outreach. Volunteer nurses will administer vaccines at the monthly, church-based immunization clinics. The project will include community education and targeted follow-up.

The grant will allow for a full-time clinic coordinator, signage at the church clinic and various advertising approaches in the community. Volunteers will staff the clinic each month, under the direction of the

clinic coordinator.

The up-to-date immunization rate is a low 49% in the Lents neighborhood, and school exclusion letters support this finding. On Exclusion Day, children who are not up-to-date with their immunization schedule are excluded from all elementary schools and certified daycare centers. Children are unable to attend school until they receive their shots. In 1993, seventy-one children from the three elementary schools serving the area received school exclusion letters. In one target area school, approximately one third of the parents of kindergartners received warning letters.

From a main intersection in the heart of Lents, it takes three bus transfers to reach the closest county health department clinic. Kathryn King, pastor of Pilgrim Lutheran Church, says that "traveling 20 or 30 blocks to a health or counseling appointment is often too great a barrier for many residents in our community."

Sandy Marron, of the Oregon Nurses Association, agrees: "The Lents neighborhood is a very underserved area. This population tends to be neglected."

The grant will take effect in March and run for one full year. However, several successful clinics have already been held at the church. Clinics will be open the first Satur-

day of every month, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Approximately 300 people have taken advantage of the immunization services to date. At the clinic, families can receive information on the Oregon health Plan. The clinic has also offered flu shots and a car seat clinic.

Evaluation of the program's effectiveness will be accomplished using both formal immunization tracking mechanisms already in place through the county health department and public school system. Participants, community leaders, volunteers and parents will also be asked to provide feedback.

As part of their Campaign for Better Health, the Oregon Nurses Association launched "Nurses Give Kids a Booster," an immunization training program for non-pediatric nurses. In the past year, ONA has offered training classes to over 500 nurses statewide. The volunteer nurses regularly staff immunization clinics and provide significant support for statewide "Immunize Now!" day.

Pastor King emphasizes, "...we are so pleased to work cooperatively with the Oregon Nurses Association and county health department to develop and strengthen the opportunity for preschool immunizations and well-child screenings at our church." Members of the church emphasize that their doors are open to anyone in need of these health services.

Medicare Supplement Changes Mean Easier Enrollment

People who are eligible for Medicare by reason of disability and who have found it difficult to purchase Medicare supplement insurance will now have an "open enrollment" period during which they can purchase the policy of their choice.

Many people who have Medicare by reason of disability don't know about their open enrollment rights, according to Lisa Joyce, Oregon's Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) Coordinator. In 1993, the Oregon Legislature expanded Medicare choices for people with disabilities. Any person has the right to enroll in any Medicare supplement plan approved for sale in the state of Oregon who is within the first six months of enrolling in Medicare Part B, including people with Medicare by reason of disability. Medicare Part

B is the part of the Medicare program that covers doctors' charges. It is available to those people who are 65 and older or disabled and who have paid into the Social Security system.

Congress recently improved upon this law by allowing persons who have Medicare by reason of disability an open enrollment period following their 65th birthday. For example, someone who became Medicare-eligible due to a disabling condition at age 50, would have six months beginning at age 65 during which no Medicare supplement company could deny coverage.

"This is great news for Medicare-eligible individuals who were discriminated against for their disabled status and denied Medicare supplement insurance coverage in the past," said Joyce.

The new legislation also offers a one-time, six-month open enrollment

opportunity to certain individuals who did not receive an open enrollment period because they were already enrolled in Medicare Part B. This special period began January 1, 1995, and ends on June 30, 1995. Beneficiaries who turned 65 after November 5, 1991, and who did not receive an open enrollment period, may purchase any Medicare supplement insurance policy available in

the state regardless of their health conditions during this special period.

Individuals who need assistance with Medicare, Medicare supplement insurance, and Medicare health maintenance organizations can get free information or referral to a trained local SHIBA volunteer for assistance by calling the SHIBA program at 1-800-722-4134.

'Managing Herpes' Gives Information Doctors May Omit

People who order "Managing Herpes: How to Live and Love with a Chronic STD," a new handbook from the American Social Health Association, are most often seeking information their physician has not provided, such as how to avoid transmitting the infection.

Published in October 1994, "Managing Herpes" has gone back to press for a second printing, bringing the total number of copies in print to 25,000. The book currently is available only through direct orders to ASHA's Herpes Resource Center.

"We have been extremely pleased with the level of interest in 'Managing Herpes' in the four months since we published it, said ASHA president Peggy Clarke.

"Many people who call to order the book mention that their doctor told them very little about how to

avoid infecting others, so they need better information on transmission," she said. "They also ask about topics such as nutrition, exercise and stress reduction that may suppress flareups of the infection. And they want more complete information on medical treatments than their doctor has provided."

Genital herpes is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S., with an estimated 40 million Americans infected, or one in four adults. About half a million people, get herpes each year. Although there is no cure for this viral STD, its physical and emotional impact can be minimized through accurate information and, for many people, some emotional counseling.

"Managing Herpes" was written by Charles Ebel, director of ASHA's Herpes Resource Center,

the only nationwide support program for people with genital herpes. The book draws on the Center's 15 years of experience in communicating daily with people who have herpes, as well as the expertise provided by medical advisers eminent in the field of herpes management.

"Managing Herpes," available in softcover, has 224 pages, six black-and-white illustrations, a glossary, resource list and index. To order the book, call the Herpes Resource Center at 800/230-6039 or the National Herpes Hotline at 919/361-8488. Both numbers operate from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Eastern) Monday through Friday. Orders may also be placed by sending \$19.75 (includes shipping and handling) to: ASHA Herpes Resource Center, Dept. PR49, P.O. Box 13827, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709.

LOW PRICES



Prices effective March 8 through March 14, 1995 at your nearby Safeway store.

Sweet Ripe Strawberries
 • Dry pint container
 • From California
79¢ Each

Ovenjoy Fresh Bread **3 For 99¢**
 • Wheat or White, 22.5-Oz.
 • FIRST 3, Additional At Regular Price

Boneless Chicken Breast **1.89** Lb.
 • Approx. 5-Lb. Package
 • Skinless

Safeway SELECT 12-Pack Soft Drinks **3 For \$5**
 • 12-Oz. cans
 • Plus deposit

Look In Your This Week Magazine for our weekly Safeway Savings Guide!

This Week MAGAZINE

Enjoy Extra Savings With The **EXTRA In-Store Safeway Savings Guide** Available at your Safeway store.